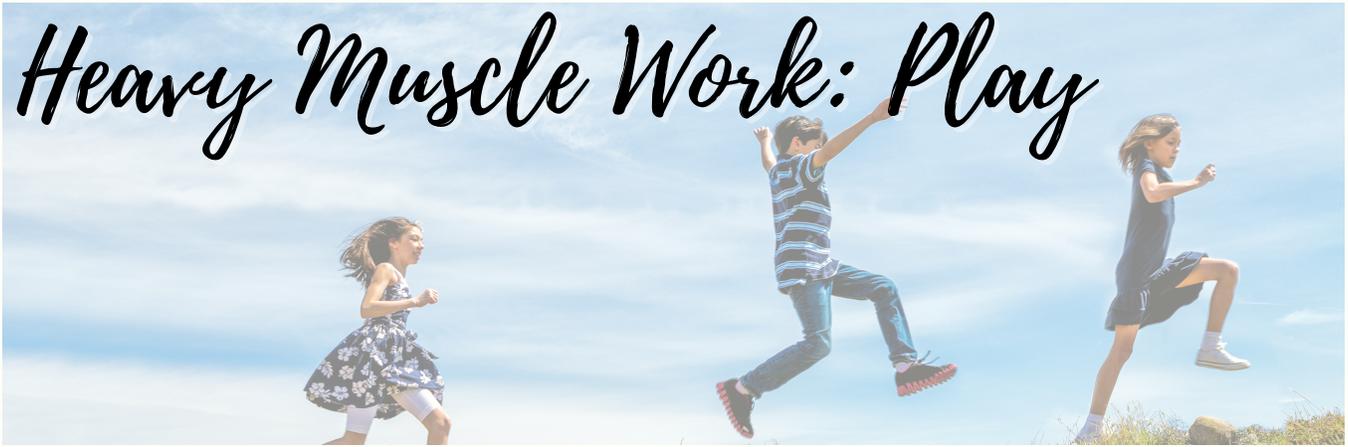


Heavy Muscle Work: Play



What Is It?

Heavy muscle work activities utilize our body's proprioceptive system. The proprioceptive system is an internal sense that comes from our muscles and joint receptors. This system helps us understand the physical boundaries of our bodies (i.e., my body is separate from your body); know where our body parts are positioned (i.e., arms above head, knees bent); plan our movements; learn new motor tasks through feedback; and use appropriate force or pressure during tasks. Doing heavy muscle work activities throughout the day can help a child achieve and maintain a calm and regulated state.



Indoor Play

- Pulling/ pushing other children or heavy items on a sheet, blanket, laundry basket, wagon, or cardboard box
- Playing "push me, pull me" (i.e., two people lock hands facing each other then push/pull their partner's hands to make their partner move)
- Sitting on the floor back-to-back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Interlock arms then try standing up at the same time
- Playing "row row row your boat" both sitting on the floor, pushing and pulling each other
- Playing Twister
- Using playdough (i.e., rolling, squishing, squeezing, using different molds/tools)
- Crawling over pillows and blankets in an obstacle course or going back and forth to get pieces for a puzzle or game
- Blowing pom poms with a straw lying on the ground while racing or navigating obstacles on the floor



Outdoor Play

- Participating in games/activities that involve running (i.e., duck-duck-goose, relay races, red light green light)
- Participating in games/activities that involve climbing (i.e., climbing trees, climbing playground equipment)
- Participating in games/activities that involve jumping (i.e., hopscotch, jump rope, leap frog)
- Walking like an animal (i.e., crab, bear, snake, frog)
- Making snow angels
- Building a snowman
- Playing Tug of War
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Playing catch with a large ball
- Blowing bubbles
- Riding a bike



Tips When Trying New Heavy Work Activities

- Pay attention to your child's response
- Discontinue if strategies are causing distress
- Consider your child's age and other sensory preferences
- Incorporate activities into daily routines

Consult with your occupational therapist for an individualized plan to meet your child's needs

